

Strengthening our Response for Improved Refugee Mental Health

"There is no health without mental health"
World Health Organization

Tuesday, August 14, 2012

**Holiday Inn Koger Conference Center
1021 Koger Center Boulevard
Richmond VA 23235
Tel: 804-379-3800**

9am to 4pm

Register here- <http://tinyurl.com/6rj3g6h>

Although refugees benefit from protective factors such as spirituality and strong family support, they face enormous social and economic factors that expose them to higher levels of stress and disadvantages due to poverty, unemployment, lack of English proficiency, discrimination and the trauma associated with the immigrant experience. As many states become more diverse, it challenges providers in the mental health system to adopt culturally and linguistically competent ways to prevent, diagnose, treat and address barriers to appropriate and timely mental health services. DBHDS is hosting a **free** training for mental health providers, refugee staff, volunteers dedicated to exploring critical topics in refugee mental health.

Who should attend this conference?

This conference is ideal for all professionals providing service, formally or informally, to immigrants and refugees. These professionals include health care practitioners, policymakers, settlement practitioners, volunteers, sponsorship agreement holders, educators, general practitioners, psychiatrists, multicultural liaison workers, translators, other human-related service providers, immigrants, refugees and consumers interested in the practice of Mental Health.

Outcomes

- To gain an understanding of the protective and risk factors associated with mental health issues that refugees experience while resettling in the US.
- To understand the cultural nuances and their impact on stigma and mental health treatment for refugees in the US
- How to build stronger working relationships culturally and linguistically to diverse individuals in mental health programs
- Explore specific topics of concern for refugees in Virginia
- Understand the importance of and strategies for language services for refugee individuals

This conference will be offered for FREE under the Office of Newcomer Services -Virginia Refugee Health Prevention Grant and hosted by the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services. Six contact hours will be provided by DBHDS.



IMPORTANT NOTE- please do not register for this conference if you are not sure that you can attend. Although this conference is offered free of charge, we make seating and refreshment plans based on the number of people registered. You will receive a confirmation email the day of the registration deadline. Please let us know if you are not able to make it once you have registered.

REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS AUGUST 6, 2012

- Welcome
- Overview of Issues in Refugee Mental Health- Saara Amri, LPC
- Break
- CAN
- Lunch
- Interviewing Clients Across Cultures - Lisa Fontes, Ph.D
- Break
- Breakout Sessions
 - Suicide Prevention among Refugees- Lisa Fontes, PhD.
 - Enhancing Language Services for Better Mental Health Outcomes- Vilma Seymour
 - Substance Abuse and Alcoholism among Refugees – Nhat Nguyen, MSW, QMHP
 - African refugees in the United States- Alimatu S Mustapha-Palmer, NCC; LPC; SCAC; CCDVC

About the Speakers



Lisa Aronson Fontes, PhD, has dedicated two decades to making the mental health, social service, and criminal justice systems more responsive to culturally diverse people. She is the author of Interviewing Clients Across Cultures: A Practitioner's Guide and Child Abuse and Culture: Working with Diverse Families. She has written numerous journal articles and chapters on cultural issues in child maltreatment and violence against women, cross-cultural research, and ethics. She teaches at the University of Massachusetts. She has worked as a family, individual, and group psychotherapist, and has conducted research in Santiago, Chile, and with Puerto Ricans, African Americans, and European Americans in the United States. Dr. Fontes is fluent in Spanish and Portuguese. She is a popular conference speaker and workshop facilitator. Dr. Fontes completed a Fulbright Foundation Grant in Buenos Aires, Argentina. As a volunteer, Dr. Fontes worked for three years with Somali refugees in Springfield, Massachusetts. Visit her website at: www.LisaFontes.com

Saara Amri, LPC, A doctoral student in counseling at George Mason University, Saara Amri has been working with the refugee, immigrant, and torture survivor population for 11 years. Saara is a licensed bilingual mental health counselor and co-coordinator of the Program for Survivors of Torture and Severe Trauma, Multicultural Human Services at Northern Virginia Family Services in Falls Church, Virginia.

Alimatu S Mustapha-Palmer, NCC; LPC; SCAC; CCDVC

Alimatu S. M. Palmer is a licensed mental health and human services visionary professional who has consulted and worked in various capacities with a number of organizations for over 20 years. She was born in Freetown Sierra Leone and immigrated to the US as a student who left her country one day after her high school graduation. She is currently the founder and executive Director of the Heritage Multicultural Programs and Services, Inc. The agency is licensed and offers trainings, consultation and multiple programs and services, including cultural and diversity services, counseling and therapy, crisis intervention services, substance abuse/ addictions treatment services, grief and loss counseling, case management and other support services. Alima initially gained Certification in Substance Abuse Counselor in the State of Virginia, and a Registered Addiction Counselor in the District of Columbia respectively. Mrs. Palmer then gained licensed and certifications in multiple states as follow: Licensed Professional Counselor in DC and Virginia respectively, Clinically Certified Domestic Violence Counselor, Clinically Certified Forensic Counselor, FEMA Certified Crisis/Disaster responder, Certified Social Work Practitioner. She is currently affiliated with several boards and organizations including, but not limited to APA, ACA, National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME), and the American College of crisis and stress debriefing. In her quest to contribute to the improvement of humanity internationally, Mrs. Palmer and her team have undertaken several projects in her native country Sierra Leone, which is recovering from a very brutal ten years (blood Diamond) civil war. Under the Bridges Gap Project in Sierra Leone the team is currently mainly focused on the newly launched (2011) Orphanage and Youth Empowerment project center in Freetown. They also continue to collaborate and support multiple projects including the UCC feeding program, Faith Orphanage Project, Totkeleh water well project, the Youth Literacy Project.

Nhat Nguyen, MSW, QMHP, QMHCM

Along with his family in the 1975, Mr. Nhat Nguyen arrived to USA as a Vietnam War refugee. After transplanting to Virginia, he completed his undergraduate in Clinical Psychology from George Mason University. He obtained his Masters in Social Work from the Virginia Commonwealth University. He is currently working for the Fairfax County Community Services Board. He has worked various settings serving adults and youths with serious mental health, intellectual and/or substance using disorders. Currently he is working as clinical supervisor with Adult Outpatient Services providing substance use and mental health co-occurring disorder treatment. He has a personal and professional passion and commitment to enhance cultural and linguistic competence throughout Fairfax County CSB. He has been involved with the IDS Diversity Committee and CSB Cultural/Linguistic Competence Steering Committee. Currently he is the vice-chair of the statewide Cultural and Linguistic Competence Steering Committee, and chair of the Policy subcommittee. Nhat is serving on the Northern Virginia Area Health Education Center's Interpretation in Mental Health Setting workgroup. Currently he is responsible for the development of the Peer Recovery Support Services for Outpatient Services. He has presented various topics and training of cultural and linguistic competence including the Stigma of Mental Health among Asian-Americans, Competent Care and Cross-Cultural Communication, Interpretation in Mental Health System of Care, Disparities across Systems of Care, and debriefings on promoting and improving services to culturally and linguistically diverse individuals.

Vilma Seymour,

Vilma Seymour, President of Multilingual and Cultural Solutions, holds a BA in Foreign Languages/Spanish and is an experienced healthcare conference presenter because of her personal interaction with immigrants, refugees and limited English proficient populations. Her extensive research and collaboration with clinicians and community leaders led to her ability to develop and implement the first sustainable language services program within the only Level I Trauma Center in Central Virginia and its satellite clinics. As an advocate for underserved populations, Vilma is passionate about ensuring compliance of federal mandates pertaining to providing meaningful access of oral and written interpreter/translation services to limited English proficient populations. She is a licensed medical interpreter and cultural competency trainer for the following national programs created by Cross Cultural Healthcare Program (CCHP), Seattle, WA and The Medical Interpreter Project, (MIP) Phoenix Children's Hospital, Phoenix, AZ.

For questions, contact Cecily Rodriguez at cecily.rodriguez@dbhds.virginia.gov or 804-786-5872.

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